

Customizing your home for the long term can be an exciting process. Being aware of the resources and opportunities around you is the a great start to choosing or building a sustainable home. Making informed decisions will bring lasting value and utility to your home.

This brief guide will point you to resources and ideas to get you to a more sustainable home.

## A Sustainable Home is

-  Visitable and accessible - to people of all ages and abilities
-  Affordable - relative to local conditions
-  Green - environmentally high-performing
-  Efficient - conserving both resources and dollars

Additional Information and ideas on various models for designing and choosing a sustainable home

[www.energystar.gov/](http://www.energystar.gov/)  
[www.solar-estimate.org/](http://www.solar-estimate.org/)  
[www.dsireusa.org/](http://www.dsireusa.org/)  
[www.greenprofessionals.org/](http://www.greenprofessionals.org/)  
[www.usgbc.org/LEED/](http://www.usgbc.org/LEED/)  
[www.sustainable sites.org](http://www.sustainable sites.org)

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# Looking For Your First Sustainable Home?



Invest in a Healthy Future

## A Guide to Sustainable Housing

## Sustainable homes are Visitable and Accessible

Making your home "visitable" to all, including those with mobility limitations, provides a basic level of access with three key features:

- ✿ One step-free entry
- ✿ Wide doorways: at least 32"
- ✿ Main-floor bathroom with wheelchair access

Visitable homes not only welcome guests, but may save thousands of dollars if a resident has a progressive or sudden impairment. Visitability is easy and inexpensive to build into a home from the start.

Visitable homes are not just for "special populations". They also make it easy for anyone to move strollers, bicycles, furniture, and other large items through doors.

Beyond basic access, the many elements of "universal design", or UD, make homes more functional and comfortable, while enhancing safety and independence. Some UD features are:

- ✿ Lever door and faucet handles
- ✿ Lighting controls: 35" above floor (max.)
- ✿ Electrical sockets: 25" above floor (max.)

## Sustainable homes are Affordable

First-time Home Buyers may benefit from assistance in navigating the process to qualify for a loan or to identify a home they can afford.

Some Important Steps:

1. Attend a home buyer's class
2. Keep track of your financial documents, e.g., pay stubs, bills
3. Check your Credit score at <http://www.creditscore.com>; a 680 is the current minimum
4. Consider your net rather than gross income: How much is left after your household expenses?



In some locations, you can qualify for a larger "location-efficient" mortgage if you locate where you can walk to most destinations.

## Sustainable homes are Green and Efficient

Environmentally friendly features may also save dollars and improve health. Many "green" features are affordable and accessible to home-owners, with subsidies and support from state and federal programs.

### Major Energy Star Appliance Savings

Appliance Type	Annual KWH Savings	% Energy Savings	Savings Over Unit Life
Clothes Washer	140	56%	\$486
Dishwasher	72	24%	\$135
Refrigerator	68	13%	\$82
Freezer	44	10%	\$71
Room Air Conditioner	76	10%	\$71

